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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 000161

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [IR](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: FM LAVROV'S ANNUAL FOREIGN POLICY REPORT

Classified By: Political External Chief Eric Green for reasons 1.4 (b,d)  
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11. (C) Summary. On January 22, FM Lavrov held his annual press conference on Russian foreign policy, covering a wide range of issues such as START, missile defense, Patriot missiles in Poland, Iran, the Middle East, European security and Haiti. He highlighted areas of friction with the west on a range of issues and emphasized the new challenges of the "multipolar" world. He said Russia's foreign policy would continue to focus on increasing Russia's influence by developing its economy, protecting its neighborhood and making headway on Medvedev's signature European Security proposal. He cited improved confidence between Russia and the U.S. in the context of the START negotiations, but he did not highlight other elements of U.S.-Russian cooperation. End summary.

Russian Foreign Policy: Correct and Continuing  
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12. (SBU) Lavrov began by taking stock of the MFA's efforts, noting that Russia's foreign policy concept adopted in 2008 had correctly addressed the challenges of today's "multipolar world system" and proved an adequate tool for the MFA during its work in 2009. He said that, in 2010, Russian diplomats would link their efforts abroad with the ongoing push towards modernization and innovation in Russia's economy. He said that among the MFA's main goals this year were: establishing a more safe environment for Russian business abroad; calming crisis and conflict zones; and enhancing stability along Russian borders.

START Talks: New Treaty a Result of  
Improved Confidence Building Measures  
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13. (SBU) On START, Lavrov was upbeat about ongoing consultations in Moscow between Admiral Mullen and General Markarov, noting that these talks "will help clarify instructions for both delegations in order to make it easier for them to outline compromise solutions." He stressed that both Russia and the U.S. were guided by their national security interests in the negotiations and stated that, "the new treaty will be signed during a period of sharply improved confidence building measures between our countries, when it is possible to work together on all issues exclusively on an equal basis and taking account of each other's interests." Lavrov said that bilateral talks on START would resume in the beginning of February.

GOR Not Ready for Joint Missile Defense,  
Unclear on Patriot Missiles  
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14. (SBU) Despite constructive U.S.-Russian dialogue on MD,

Lavrov cast the issue in a negative light, saying, "We have told the U.S. and NATO that it is necessary to start everything from scratch -- to jointly analyze the origin and types of missile proliferation risks and threats...But they have simply told us: these are the systems we plan to develop, and you will have to contribute your radars. This is not the kind of approach we are ready to support." He also mentioned that, regarding plans for a joint U.S.-Japanese missile defense system in the Far East, GOR would examine possible consequences this system would have on the strategic stability in that region.

15. (SBU) On the deployment of the U.S. Patriot missile system in Poland, Lavrov stated that while this was a matter of bilateral relations between the U.S. and Poland, the fact that they were located so close to Russia deserved an explanation, lest the deployment give the impression that Poland is being fortified against Russia. He reiterated that this was a bilateral issue between two NATO allies, and expressed the GOR's interest in advancing relations with both Poland and NATO on the basis of confidence and respect for each other's interests.

Iran and the Middle East  
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16. (SBU) On Iran, Lavrov said Russia "regrets the fact that Iran does not think it is possible to agree to the formula regarding the production of fuel for Tehran's experimental reactor." However, referring to sanctions, Lavrov cautioned that, "to punish Iran is not a very sober-minded approach."

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On the Middle East peace process, he stated that the GOR will continue to engage with Hamas, noting, "In our work with Hamas we intend to persuade our partners not to drag out the implementation of the understanding that Cairo is promoting."

He stressed that resuming talks would require a united Palestinian Authority, and that the main obstacle to talks was the Israeli policy of settlements. A ministerial session of the Middle East Quartet was needed soon, he said, because the Quartet "still bears specific responsibility for the implementation of agreements" between the parties and of the UN Security Council.

European Security: GOR's Proposal a Test  
of NATO Partners' Sincerity  
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17. (SBU) Lavrov struck a particularly antagonistic tone in discussing Russia's proposed European security treaty, repeatedly questioning whether NATO partners' reservations about Russia's proposals meant that they were insincere about European unity, friendship and security. He stressed that Russia's draft treaty is designed to make legally binding the political commitments made by western countries in the 1990s.

"We simply wanted to understand whether our partners were sincere when in the 1990s they solemnly declared that nobody would strengthen one's own security at the expense of the security of others," he said.

Haiti: U.S. Troop Presence Understandable  
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18. (SBU) Concerning Haiti, Lavrov highlighted Russia's active participation to help the people of Haiti. He stated that humanitarian disasters such as this often demand the use of the military because of its speed and effectiveness, and likewise the GOR was not concerned about the presence of U.S. troops in Haiti. However, Lavrov noted that the GOR hoped that no country would take advantage of the situation in Haiti for purposes other than those of humanitarian aid.

Comment  
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19. (C) As is his wont, Lavrov used this public forum to highlight areas of friction between Russia and the west on a range of issues and to emphasize multi-polarity and downplay Moscow's improved relations with the U.S. (In private, he has been much more supportive of improving U.S.-Russian relations.) Russia's foreign policy priorities, as articulated by Lavrov, are not surprising: a continued focus on building up Russia's influence by developing its economy, protecting its "privileged interests" in its immediate neighborhood and making headway on Medvedev's signature European Security proposal.  
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